



Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish,
From 'Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest'

CAREX LIVIDA **PALE SEDGE**

Pale Sedge is a grass-like perennial that grows in small clumps with flowering stems up to 20 cm tall and arising from long, slender rhizomes. Leaves are clustered on the lower third of the stem and have a thin pale-bluish waxy coating; they are 1-4 mm wide with long, pointed tips. The inflorescence consists of 2-3, or sometimes 4, loosely clustered spikes. The narrow terminal spike is 7-30 mm long and either is composed entirely of male flowers or has several perigynia borne at the top. The lower spikes are composed entirely of perigynia and are borne on short stalks; the bract at the base of the inflorescence usually exceeds the uppermost spike. The scales that subtend perigynia are light or dark brown in color with a green midvein. Perigynia are 2-4 mm long, pale green and glabrous elliptic or ovate in outline with a short beak at the tip, and have a bumpy surface. Each perigynium has 3 stigmas and an achene that is 3-sided. Fruit mature in late June-early August.

CAREX LIVIDA has a distinctly pale, waxy appearance to the foliage in the field, and a densely bumpy surface on the perigynium that is diagnostic. A hand lens or microscope and technical key are needed for positive identification.